

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 02935

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV BQG
SUBJECT: FRENCH STATEMENT ON LEAK OF REPORT OF BRUNET/
ABRASIMOV CONVERSATION

REFS: (A) USBER365; (B) USBER 361; (C) 77 BONN 20154;
(D) 77 BONN 5062

1. AT THE FEBRUARY 14 BONN GROUP MEETING, FRENCH REP
(RICHARD) READ AND THEN DISTRIBUTED A PREPARED
STATEMENT REGARDING THE LEAK OF INFORMATION ON THE
BRUNET/ABRASIMOV CONVERSATION. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH
HAD GIVEN TO THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE BONN GROUP (NO
MENTION WAS MADE OF DISTRIBUTION IN BERLIN) DETAILS OF
THE CONVERSATION ON CONDITION OF SECRECY. SUCH EX-
CHANGES ARE ONLY POSSIBLE IF THE CONFIDENTIAL CHARACTER
IS RESPECTED, HE SAID, AND IT APPEARS THAT THIS RULE
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WAS NOT OBSERVED IN THIS CASE. HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS
NOT THE FIRST SUCH LEAK, REFERRING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS OF
THE DIFFERENCES IN THE SOVIET PROTESTS ON EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN BERLIN (REF C), AND
SAID THE LEAKS REVEALED A CERTAIN LACK OF CARE BY THOSE
ENTRUSTED WITH SUCH INFORMATION. RICHARD
CALLED THE PRESENT LEAK ONE OF PARTICULAR GRAVITY.

2. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH STRIVE TO INFORM THEIR COLLEAGUES OF ALL THAT MIGHT BE OF COMMON INTEREST AND THAT THEY APPRECIATE THE PRACTICE OF RECIPROCITY OF SUCH EXCHANGES. HOWEVER, INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE LEAK IN QUESTION CAN ONLY PREJUDICE THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE BONN GROUP AND AFFECT THE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE WHICH HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN ITS MEMBERS. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT THE FRENCH MAY BE FORCED TO BE MORE CIRCUMSPECT IN THE FUTURE WITH RESPECT TO THE INFORMATION WHICH IS DISTRIBUTED TO THE BONN GROUP.

3. THE FRG, US AND UK REPS ALL EXPRESSED REGRET AT THE UNFORTUNATE LEAK AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD NOT RESULT IN A DRYING UP OF THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE WHICH EXISTS IN THE BONN GROUP. PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE BERLIN SENAT HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF LEAKING IN THE PAST, MEICHSNER OF THE BERLIN REPRESENTATION SOUGHT TO DISCOUNT THAT AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE BY SAYING THAT NO ONE REGRETS THIS MORE THAN MAYOR STOBBE. HE SAID THAT STOBBE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CAREFUL TO ENSURE THAT INFORMATION REGARDING SUCH MATTERS IS CLOSELY HELD BY THE SENAT AND THAT ALTHOUGH THIS MAKES THE WORK OF STOBBE'S STAFF MORE DIFFICULT, ONLY STOBBE, CHIEF OF CHANCELLERY HEIMANN AND VISITS COMMISSIONER KUNZE ARE PRIVY TO SUCH INFORMATION. OF THE THREE, ONLY STOBBE ALLEGEDLY KNOWS CONFIDENTIAL

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ENOUGH FRENCH TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH IT.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS SIMILAR TO THE LEAK OF A REPORT OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRENCH AMBASSADOR WORMSER AND ABRASIMOV LAST YEAR (REF D). IT IS IRONIC THAT THE FRENCH, WHO APPEAR TO HAVE THE LEAST TO SHARE, ARE BEDEVILED WITH EMBARRASSING LEAKS.

5. SINCE, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, ONLY THE REFERENCE TO ABRASIMOV'S STATEMENT THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT SEEK A NEW PARTNER HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS, IT MAY BE THAT THE LEAK WAS ONLY AN ORAL REPETITION OF THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION RATHER THAN A LEAK OF THE ENTIRE REPORT OF THE BRUNET/ABRASIMOV CONVERSATION (ALTHOUGH "WELT AM SONNTAG" CLAIMED TO HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE REPORT). RICHARD INFORMED THE US AND UK BONN GROUP REPS ON FEBRUARY 13 OF THE STATEMENT HE PLANNED TO MAKE IN THE BONN GROUP THE FOLLOWING DAY; WE THUS ASSUME THE FRENCH CONSIDER THE GERMANS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LEAK. HE SPECIFICALLY SAID AT THE FEBRUARY 14 MEETING THAT THE FRENCH DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES RESPONSIBLE. MEEHAN

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